

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FACILITATED COMMUNICATION

The goal of training programs designed to train facilitators is the same: to produce qualified, competent facilitators. The essential common elements of a training program are: an introductory overview which covers important background information on FC, basic facilitator skills training, ongoing technical assistance and continuing education, and advanced training for trainers of facilitators. Training must be provided by individuals with extensive experience and skill with FC. To be effective, it must be provided on a regular, ongoing and long-term basis to schools and agencies. It is understood that the skills of both facilitators and people using FC will progress through different stages, e.g. fading physical support and that at each stage, they will need training and supervision to maintain and advance their skills

**Introductory Information:** Training begins with the delivery of introductory information by an experienced FC trainer. This can occur on a one to one basis, in small groups, or in a workshop format. It typically takes from two to eight hours, with the longer workshops taking two to three days. This is intended as an introduction to FC and is attended by people interested in becoming a facilitator or those families, school or social service administrators who want to learn more about the method. This level of training may be useful in helping individual teams decide whether to explore the use of FC with a person they are involved with. People participating at this level have gained only an overview of FC and do NOT have the skills necessary to be a facilitator.

**Beginner facilitator skills:** This stage of training is designed to teach new facilitators basic skills in facilitation. During this stage, the new facilitator must receive hands-on training and supervision from an experienced facilitator/FC trainer. The level of supervision is initially intensive, e.g., once a week and will decrease over time as skills/competencies are gained. The new facilitator must have time to practice his or her skills with a FC user in addition to working with the supervisor in training sessions.

**Intermediate level:** This level of training is for experienced facilitators who have had at least 6 months of direct work with a FC user. At this level, training focuses on increasing facilitator skills in the areas of fading support, authorship and supporting FC users in a variety of communication situations, e.g., home, school, community, social, etc. To broaden their experience with FC, it is beneficial if facilitators can begin to work with more than one FC user.

**Advanced Level:** This level of training would be for experienced facilitators who have had at least one year's experience with FC and have worked successfully with several different FC users. Facilitators at this level may be designated by their agencies/schools to serve as supervisors and coaches of facilitators. This would help to build within agencies and schools the organizational capacity to provide ongoing training and supervision for FC. These individuals would participate in "train the trainer" programs and would be mentored by individuals who are at the master trainer level of FC training.